



A.M.D.G.  
**CRESCENT COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE S.J.**

# **Crescent College Comprehensive, SJ Critical Incident Management Plan**

Revised on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM**

- ❖ **Principal: Ms. Karin Fleming**
- ❖ **Deputy Head: Ms. S Mulcahy**
- ❖ **Deputy Head: Mr. Diarmuid Mullins**
- ❖ **Guidance Counsellor: Ms. Ita Danaher**
- ❖ **Guidance Counsellor: Mr. Peter Moloney**
- ❖ **Guidance Counsellor: Ms. Caroline Coughlan**
- ❖ **Staff Chair: Ms. Fiona O' Boyle**
- ❖ **Coordinator of Ethos & School Chaplain: Ms. Grainne Delaney**
- ❖ **Health and Safety Officer: Mr. Peter Moloney**
- ❖ **Special Education Needs Coordinator: Mr. Eamonn Tuite**
- ❖ **Administration Rep: Ms. Michele Dunford**
- ❖ **Administration Rep: Ms. Maeve O'Donnell**
- ❖ **Caretaker: Mr. Pat McCoy. Ann Mc Coy**
- ❖ **School IT Worker: Mr. Mike Donnegan**
- ❖ **Student Support Worker: Ms. Ann Guinee**
- ❖ **Jesuit Community: Fr. Jim Maher SJ**
- ❖ **Others: e.g. Relevant Year Heads as appropriate**

## **A CRITICAL INCIDENT**

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school. Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school or our local community.

Types of incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, permanent injury, terminal illness or suicide.
- A physical attack on staff member(s) or students(s) or intrusion into the school causing serious injury.
- A life-threatening accident involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- An accident or tragedy in the wider community that had a significant impact on the school community.
- The onset of serious illness causing distress or trauma may in some cases lead to a critical incident or an epidemic of serious illness among pupils and/or staff.

## **COMMUNICATION:**

Once information about a critical incident has been received by the Principal, Deputy Principal or person in charge, the Chairperson of the Board of Management shall be informed and the Critical Incident Plan (CIP) will be put into action. The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will be notified of the time and location of the team meeting by the most senior person available.

Every effort will be made to disseminate appropriate information to the staff, parents and media as soon as it is appropriate and possible to do so by some or all of the following means:

- School Website: [www.crescentsj.com](http://www.crescentsj.com)
- School App
- Email

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT ROOM(S)**

In the event of a critical incident **The Library** will be the main room(s) used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

The Administration Area will be staffed and phones answered from there.

Should the school or parts of the school building be out of commission the following locations can be used

- The Social Area / P.E. Hall
- The Dining Hall
- The Jesuit Bungalows
- The Limerick Education Centre

## **FIRST DAY: SHORT-TERM ACTIONS**

### **Summary checklist for Principal/Deputy Principal/Members of CIMT Team**

- The Principal, Deputy Principal or any member of the CIMT gathers the facts - Who? What? When? Where? (from relevant staff and witnesses)
- Chairperson of the BOM is informed
- CONVENE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM and assign roles and responsibilities to members of the CIMT
- Inform parents/guardians. Decide if this is by phone or in person.
- Make contact with the bereaved family and ascertain what they wish communicated.
- Contact the appropriate agencies
- Arrange for supervision of students
- Inform All staff
- Organise timetable for the day
- Inform Parents
- Inform Students (If appropriate)
- Appoint someone to deal with phone enquiries. Create a designated incident phone line.
- Establish a liaison person at scene of accident (where necessary)
- Agree on a statement of facts
- Appoint someone to deal with internet inquiries and web liaison
- Respond to the media. Appoint someone to deal with the media.

**Maintain the normal school routine when at all possible.**

## Key Roles to be Assigned

TASK	NAME
Overall Management of Response	
Communication	
Contact Support Services	
Administration Tasks	
Supervision	
Media Liaison	
Parent Liaison	
Community Liaison	
Student Liaison	
Staff Liaison	

## Hold Staff Meeting

Staff meetings will take place in the staff room and all staff should attend, including administration and support staff. The areas which might be covered are listed below.

- An account of the facts as known.
- An opportunity for staff to express their views and their feelings.
- Discussion with the staff about how the facts will be shared with the students. (There should be an agreed approach to this if possible.)
- An outline of the routine for the day.
- Information for staff about which outside agencies have been contacted, or are involved and the supports that will be put in place for both students and staff.
- A procedure for identifying vulnerable students.
- Distribution of relevant handout material.
- Staff will be made aware of the Critical Incident Plan put in place by the CIMT.
- The following will be stressed to staff:
  - 1) Any enquires regarding the incident will be referred to the Principal or the person assigned to that role by the CIMT.
  - 2) No comment on the incident should be made through any social media site
  - 3) No photographs of the student(s) involved will be given to anyone or shared on social media

## **INFORM PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

### **→ Children Directly Involved**

Parents/Guardians should be contacted as soon as possible, and this first contact will need to be handled with great sensitivity. The steps involved are set out below:

- Agree who should share information with parents and how this should be done.
- Make a list of parents/guardians who have been contacted and those who will still need to be told to avoid duplication of messages.
- Give parents/guardians relevant factual information.
- Set a room aside for distressed students to meet their parents/guardians
- Provide support to parents who are on their own when they arrive at the school. Ask them to bring a support person with them if possible, especially if they are directly involved.
- Give telephone number for enquiries. List on previous page.
- Provide tea/coffee/water or other appropriate catering.

## **Children Not Directly Involved**

The parent/guardians of other children in the school should be informed of the incident and that their child may be upset.

Where appropriate a brief statement will be posted on the school website giving the facts about the incident. A message alerting the parent body of this statement may be posted on the app.

It may not be appropriate at this point to disclose the names of those involved.

## **Inform Students**

Careful preparation is important when meeting students to inform them of a critical incident. Consideration should be given to the age of the pupils and the optimum group size. It is best to do it in class groups or sub-groups. The suitability of the 'messenger' should also be considered, remembering that it is generally thought that immediate support is best given by the adults known to the child. Any outside 'expert' might help by assisting the people undertaking the task to prepare for it and by providing ongoing advice and support as they manage it. The nature of the event will clearly have an influence on how students are informed.

*Normally the Form Tutor, accompanied by another (if desired) will be fully briefed and will brief the students in their form class. The Chaplain can be part of the briefing process. If the Form Tutor prefers, the briefing of students can be done by a member or the CIMT.*

### **The Key Points/Actions in the Process are Listed Below:**

- ✓ Give facts and avoid speculation. This will help to dispel rumours which can cause unnecessary stress.
- ✓ Allow pupils to ask questions, tell their story and express feelings.
- ✓ Help students realise that overwhelming emotions are natural and normal following a critical incident.
- ✓ Advise teachers on how they can support students in school following a critical incident.

## **Dealing with the Media**

***It is important that this is not a rushed response and time must be taken to ensure that it is done correctly.***

Make contact with the family or families involved in the incident.

- Permission from the family (s) involved must be sought.
- Inform family of any proposed press release
- Tell them what you are going to say/when/how

*Prepare a written statement to include:*

- The facts about the incident
- What has been done already
- What is going to be done
- Positive information or comments about the deceased person

Brief staff and students and advise them on dealing with the media.

***No photographs should be given to any reporters or posted on any social media site or the school website.***

Refer all queries to the Principal.

## **Organise the reunion of student with their parents, if necessary.**

- Inform the students that their parents/guardians will be collecting them as soon as possible.
- Facilitate distressed students and their parents by providing a private room where they can meet following an incident. This could be a very emotional time.
- Appropriate places during school time maybe the library (but using a side entrance), the bungalows, dining hall or social area.
- Where appropriate offer help with transport, especially for younger children.

## Medium Term Actions and Roles Assigned

### 24-72 HOURS

#### Reconvene Critical Incident Management Team

<b>TASK</b>	<b>NAME</b>
Review the events of the first 24 hours	<b>CIMT</b>
Have review staff meeting with all staff if necessary	<b>STAFF</b>
Ensure staff are kept up-to-date on any developments	
Briefly check out how each person on this team is coping	
Decide on allocation of tasks	
Decide arrangements for support meetings and support	
Plan the reintegration of students and staff	
Decide on mechanism for feedback from teachers on vulnerable students	
Plan visits to injured	
Liaise with family re: funeral arrangements/memorial service	
Attendance/participation at funeral service, etc.	<b>STAFF</b>
School Closure	<b>BOM</b>

Arrange support for individual students, groups of students and parents, if necessary.

- ✓ Provide suitable room
- ✓ Hold support/information meeting for parents/students in order to clarify what has happened
- ✓ Offer advice and reassurance. Inform them about support services and provide relevant handouts.
- ✓ Give any teacher who feels uncomfortable with involvement in support meetings the choice of opting out and ensure that there is support in place for them.
- ✓ Arrange, in consultation with outside agencies, individual or group debriefings or support meetings with parental permission.

## **Longer Term Actions and Roles Assigned**

### **BEYOND 72 HOURS**

<b>TASK</b>	<b>NAME/GROUP</b>
<u>Monitor students attendance</u>	<u><b>FT / Class Teacher</b></u>
<u>Monitor students for signs of continuing upset/distress</u>	<u><b>Class Teachers</b></u>
Evaluate response to incident and amend Critical Incident accordingly	<b>CIMT/Staff/BOM</b>
Formalise plan for the future	<b>CIMT/Staff/BOM</b>
<u>Inform new teachers and student teachers where appropriate</u>	<u><b>CIMT</b></u>
Decide on appropriate ways to deal with anniversaries	<b>BOM/Parents</b>

## **Record keeping**

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.

The school secretary will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

## **Confidentiality and good name considerations**

The management and staff have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and need to be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements.

The members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that students do also. For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used in the absence of an autopsy and/or without the consent of the parents/carers.

## Suggested Guidelines for Teachers

- Only when the incident is confirmed by the family, can it be relayed to the students.
- The Class of the student who has died should be the first to be informed with the Chaplain, Counselor and Tutor present.
- Other classes should be informed by their Year-Heads.
- Not every class is going to be traumatised as some students may not even know the deceased. It is important to acknowledge the loss for the whole college community.
- Tell the class you have sad news and that it is difficult for you to do this.
- Let them know the name of the person.
- Let them know the facts - rumours should be prevented as far as possible.
- Encourage them to ask questions.
- Let the class know the common reactions to tragic news.
- The initial reaction is shock and disbelief followed by sadness.
- Don't allow a student to leave the class in a distressed state unless they are supervised. Let them know that you support them.
- Let them know who else is available to support them.
- Don't be afraid to let them know that you are also upset by the news.
- Allow them time to mingle and talk to one another in groups.
- Explain how they can support one another.
- Be attentive to identifying those who are not coping well with the news.
- Let them know where the CIMT will be situated. Possibly the Chaplain's Office, prayer room, library, dining hall, bungalows, designated classroom etc.
- Arrange to have refreshments available (also boxes of tissues).
- A short prayer or time of reflection for the deceased is generally appropriate.
- A Year Group Assembly may be held later in the day.
- Some students may be able to go to class and may wish to carry on as normal.
- Some students will need to stay with a member of the CIMT for the morning.
- Encourage students to stay in school to support their friends. Some may need to go home - only if parents can collect them and ensure supervision at home.
- Those who go to class may not be able to concentrate on the work of the class.
- Subject Teachers will need to make allowances for them to talk in groups.

### **Team Supervision:**

Team supervision is a process whereby an external supervisor is available daily by telephone and to visit the school if required to support the SST in fulfilling its role and responsibility. The Supervisor will meet with the SST once a term to review the student plans including the assessment of risk, referral pathways, records and team support.

### **Aim of supervision:**

- To equip team members with the knowledge and skills to intervene effectively with students on a range of critical student support matters. To assist the team to identify signs of risk.
- To develop and implement an evidence based plan of intervention using the Kolb model of reflective practice and problem-solving.
- To attend to team support and development issues.
- To clarify the SST roles and responsibilities.
- To ensure accountability for the work undertaken by the team.
- To provide regular and constructive feedback and review to the team on its assessments, student support plans and outcome of an intervention.
- To ensure that records are maintained to high standards.
- To review the supervision contract annually.

## **Sample Statement for the Media and letter to parents**

It is with profound sadness that the Management, staff and students of \_\_\_\_\_ , have learned of the tragic death of \_\_\_\_\_. Our sincerest sympathy is extended to his/her family.

On hearing the tragic news, the Critical Incident Management Plan was put into immediate operation. The Crisis Response team convened a meeting to ensure that students affected by this loss are being cared for adequately. Procedures are in place to ensure that all in the School Community affected by this loss are given all the help they need to cope at this time.

The school is offering counseling and support for students and parents affected by this tragedy. Prayer services have been held with each class in the school. Students will attend and participate in the funeral service in consultation with the wishes of the family. Our prayers and support are with everyone affected by this tragedy.

## **Sample Letter To Parents/Guardians**

Dear Parents/Guardians

The school has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our students/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury. (Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost). We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. (Elaborate)

It is possible that your child may have some feelings that he/she may like to discuss with you. You can help your child by taking time to listen to him/her and encouraging him/her to express his/her feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to his/her age. If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at the college. (Details)

**Sample letter requesting consent for Involvement of Outside Professionals.**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following the recent (tragedy/ death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will consist of talking to students either in small groups or on a one to one basis, and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate. Your son/daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (X). If you would like your son/daughter to receive this support, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by (date... )

If you would like further information on the above or if you would like to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip, or contact the school Principal. IM/e consent to having our son/daughter meet with .....

I understand that my son/daughter may meet x in an individual or group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_